№ 9 (57)
May 2000

# The Right to Freedom

The Bulletin of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna"


Photo of "RF"

## CHRONICLE

*On April 21* Homel City Court considered the cassation complaint on the decision of Rechytsa Town Court concerning the case of Valiantsin Hulai, who had refused to serve in the army because of his religious beliefs. On May 23, 2000, in spite of the fact that according to the international undertakings of the Republic of Belarus its citizens should have the right to alternative service, V. Hulai was sentenced to one year and six months of conditional imprisonment with the obligatory drawing to correction labor in the places determined by the bodies charged with the sentence execution. On April 21 Aleh Kulak, public defender of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, took part in consideration of the cassation complaint. The judicial assembly abolished the sentence made by Rechytsa Town Court, Hulai's actions were requalified. As a result V. Hulai was sentenced to one year of conditional imprisonment. Immediately after the assembly made this sentence Valiantsin Hulai was released from custody.

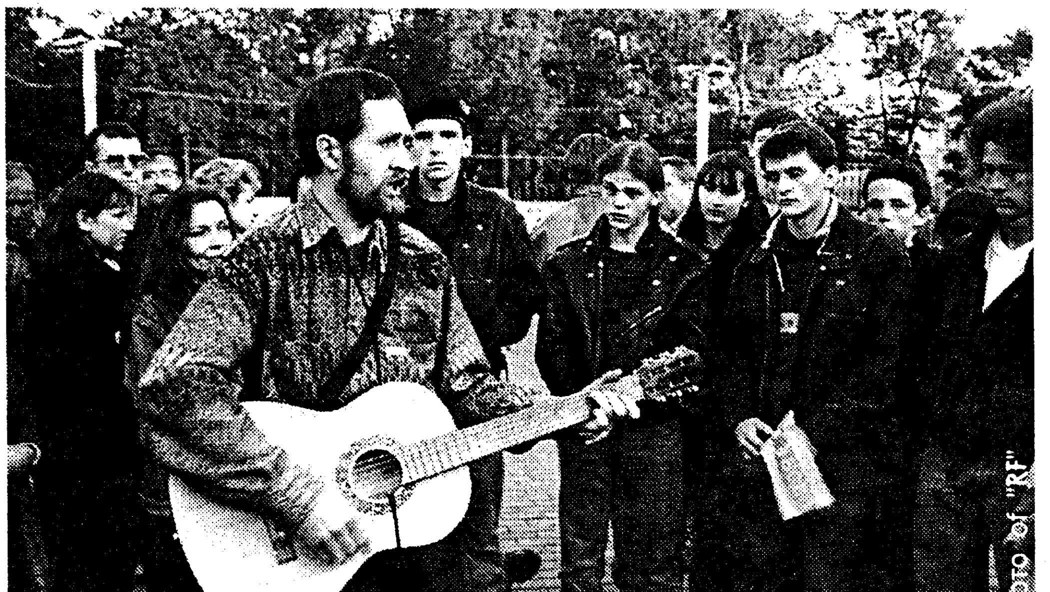
*On April 26* in Homel, at the action «Time to Mourn» devoted to the 14th anniversary of the accident at Charnobyl Nuclear Power Station, wife of a leader of the local opposition was announced to have been beaten. According to the woman's witness, somebody rang the doorbell and called her name. When she opened the door several people in civilian clothes burst into the flat. They beat her, threatened to massacre her husband and daughter if they took part in the action «Time to Mourn» and went on «the opposition propaganda».
*(continued on pages 6-7)*

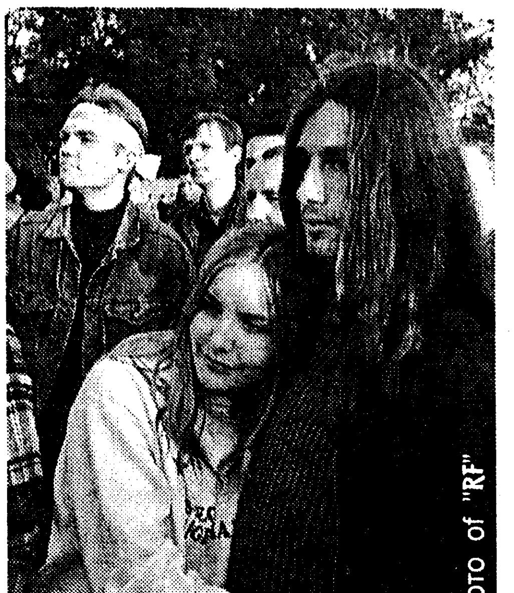
# LAST CHORD OF «HOT SPRING'2000»

Five years ago, on May 14, 1995 the disgraceful referendum that gave A.Lukashenko the possibility to change the national Belarusian symbols, the white-red-white flag and the emblem «Pahonia» into modifications of the Soviet ones took place. Since then the Russian language has started to displace Belarusian in schools.

On May 14, 2000 the Belarusian opposition carried out a mass action in protection of the Belarusian language and the national symbols. Several thousand people went out in Kastrychnitskaia Square in traditional Belarusian clothes, carrying white-red-white flags, flowers of white and red colors, and. They sang songs and cried out "Long Live Belarus!". The police were observing the action and shooting its participants with camera. Pickets and meetings were also carried out in Vitsebsk, Mahiliow, Babruisk, Barysaw, other Belarusian and foreign towns and cities.

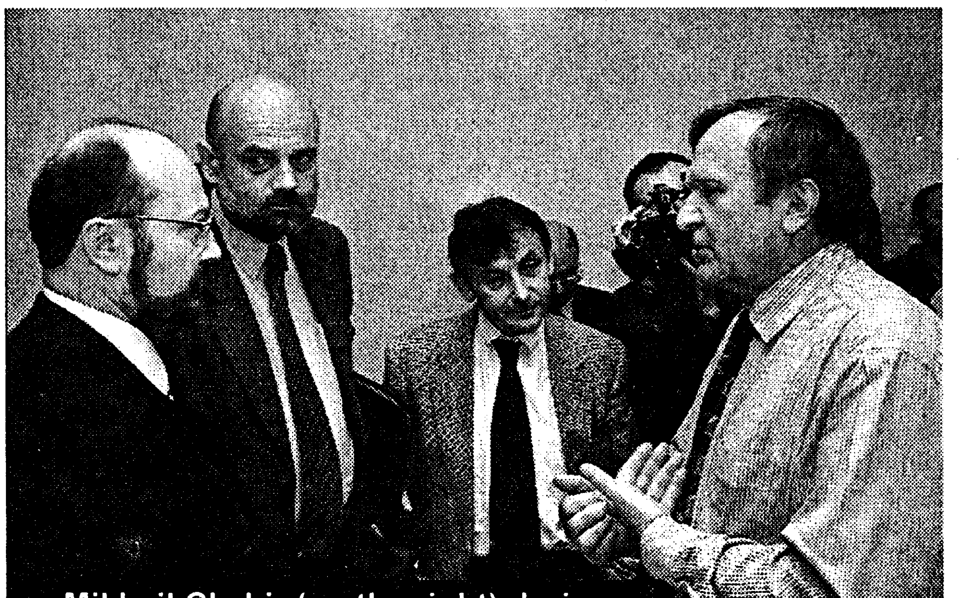

Photo of "RF"


Minsk. May 14, 2000.
Photo of "RF"


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# Put Off Till Unknown Date

## The Date of Announcement of Sentence Given to Ex-premier-minister of the Republic of Belarus Mikhail Chyhir Is Still Unknown



Mikhail Chyhir (on the right) during the break between the court sittings

On May 10 Mikhail Chyhir took his last word at Minsk City Court. The judge left the sitting hall without telling the people present the date when the sentence made by the court would be announced...

The trial over Mikhail Chyhir has a great resonance. That's why many people have gathered in the sitting hall from its very beginning. On the last day of the trial people still had problems when entering the court building. The policemen who had ringed the building let people in selectively. The people who were not let in were told that there was lack of free places in the sitting hall. It seems a little weird: though it could be easily predicted that many people would attend the trial the court sittings were not transferred to a bigger hall, though there was a free one above the hall in which the sittings were held. It's not quite understandable, who needed to create such problems both for the police and for the trial observers.

Workers of Foreign Embassies among whom there were Ambassadors of France and Germany also came to the trial to listen to the last word of the Belarusian ex-premier-minister. In general, this trial drew great attention of the international publicity.

Mikhail Chyhir began his speech with the confession that six years ago he had made an unforgivable mistake. This mistake was that he had agreed to Lukashenko's proposal to take the position of Premier-minister. «I believed the man whom I didn't know and whom I saw the first time in my life. Behind him there was his victory at the Presidential Elections, in front of him there was an unknown future, the future of the Belarusian State under the governing of the first president. M. Chyhir pointed out that from the very beginning he hadn't agreed with Aliaxandr Lukashenko's methods of economic governing. He also understood that the first president gained the power on the base of sheer populism and that his pre-election promises to the Belarusian people could not be executed. Nevertheless, Chyhir agreed to become pri-me minister and soon left the chair of head of Joint-stock Commercial Bank «Belahraprambank». The reason for it was his assurance in his own knowledge and abilities as well as the wish to be useful for his State and people. Chyhir also hoped to carry out an independent economic politics. But these hopes didn't come true. «President violated his promise not to intrude in the economy during the first months of our cooperation», – stated the ex-minister. As a result, Chyhir had to leave the chair in November 1996 because of disagreement with the politics carried out by the president.

The defendant explained to the court that he didn't take the blame and thought that his case is politically motivated. He also explained why he had decided to appear as a candidate for Presidential position. After his retirement, said Chyhir, the authorities deprived him and the members of his family of the possibility to work in Belarus. Every week he had to go to Moscow and work there. He got acquainted with many Belarusian citizens who also had to «earn their living» abroad. Chyhir stated that these people were the most clever and pushing ones. They were deprived of the possibility to be useful for their nation. He perceived the unfair nature of the present system of governing. This lead him to the decision to participate in the Presidential elections in spring 1999. On March 31, three hours before getting the mandate of the candidate on the Presidential position Chyhir was arrested (the authorities hadn't had any pretensions to him before). There's one interesting thing: in four months after Chyhir had been released under his written recognizement not to leave the city both envoys of Chyhir as a candidate on the Presidential position got in trouble: Arnold Piacherski perished in an accident, Iury Zakharanka was kidnapped by a group of unknown people on May 8...

Now, let's return to the court. Mikhail Chyhir called Aliaxandr Lukashenko «the main causer of the events described in the case». Basing on the witnesses given by different people in the court, Mikhail Chyhir earnestly illustrated that the accusations similar to those put against him can «paralyze the ability to take decisions of officials at any level». «That's why», — continued the defendant, — «together with the sentence given to citizen Chyhir, the judge will give sentence to the whole bank system of Belarus, and may be not only to it...»

Mikhail Chyhir expressed his assurance that sooner or later his case would be reconsidered and he would be justified. He also advised Prosecutor Zhynhel and the judges to attentively read Criminal Code, especially the article concerning giving sentence to innocent people.

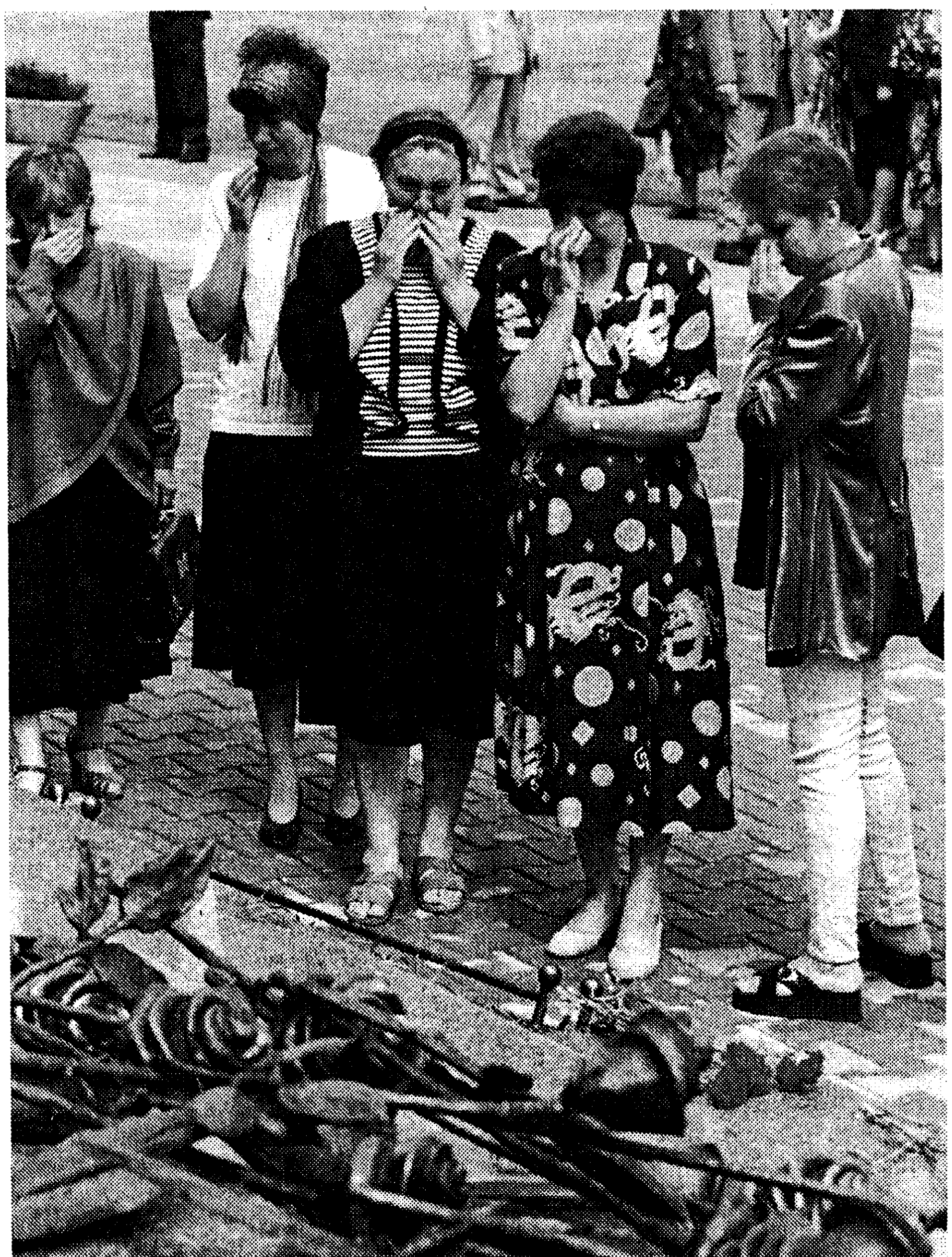
But in the case of just verdict Chyhir was ready to forgive the authorities their illegal actions against him. He said: «I understand that the case is of political nature. Political struggle sometimes can exceed the legal borders. I don't have anything to penitent in. I'm not guilty and there's nothing I can be judged for. I'm ready to listen to any sentence and am strong enough to endure the cross of the fate whatever hard it will be...».

Chyhir's speech was met by applause of the audience. Prosecutor turned red listening to his last words, the judge scowled. It means that these people understood what things were made in the court with their participation. Anyway, the date of the public announcement of the sentence was not called. Some journalists fear that it can be announced in several hours before execution, the newspapers will not manage to timely inform people, and the people won't gather... But the defendant thinks that there's another reason for this lead time. He thinks that authorities want him to escape abroad. Such hints from their side have sounded from the beginning of the previous year, when the Parliament announced the beginning of the Presidential Elections in compliance with the «pre-referendum» constitution. The pressure on Chyhir and his family has recently hardened. But he is not going to leave his country. For Chyhir the main thing is to prove that he was arrested for nothing. Now it's evident that he hadn't stolen millions of dollars as it was interpreted by Lukashenko's propaganda. The opposition considers justification of this politician as one of the conditions without execution of which participation in any elections is impossible.

**Tatsiana SNITKO**

# «Now We Can't Do Anything Else for Them...»

***More than a year ago, on May 30, 1999 53 persons perished in the underground pedestrian crossing «Niamiha» in Minsk. Many events have passed since then. Unfortunately, there are still many unsolved problems that worry the parents and relatives of those who perished. The investigation of the matter has not been finished yet. On April 30, 2000 it was prolonged for two months more. The question of a permanent monument at the place of the tragedy has not been solved either in spite of numerous talks about this on the highest level in summer 1999, on the eve of installation o f so called «temporary» monument on the 40th day after the mass peril. Parents of the people who died in the pedestrian underground crossing dislike the monument. They think that it doesn't show the real depth of the tragedy that took place at the underground pedestrian crossing and doesn't commemorate their children in a proper way. At the request of the correspondent of «The Right to Freedom» the children's parents and the people who have made concrete proposals a nd projects connected with the installation of appropriate monument at the place of the tragedy expressed their opinions.***



**Friends and relatives of the people who perished stand in front of the «temporary»** ***monument.***

**Tatsiana Mikhailawna Navakowskaia**, *whose daughter Aliawtsina died at the underground pedestrian crossing, is Chairman of the Center of Social Protection «Niamiha-99».* She said: «The main task of the Center is to retain memory about the people who died on May 30, 1999 at the pedestrian underground crossing «Niamiha». (...) Preserving memory of our dear children we devote the rest of our lives to them. Now we can't do anything else for them...

Beginning from July 30 on the 30th day of every month parents and relatives of the people who died at the «Niamiha» meet in the evening in the pedestrian underground crossing. Mothers and fathers who live in other regions come as well. We put flowers, tidy up the place, stand here for a long time and commemorate our children who breathed their last at this crossing. We can't indifferently bear bad behavior of young people such as noise, laughter, cries, spittles, etc. This place has already become a memorial, and the parents have the right to strive for the transfer of the underground exit to another place».

**Mikhail Mikhailavich Inkow**, *a sculptor and architect, father of Maryia Inkova who died at the «Niamiha»:* «When the information about creation of a monument at the «Niamiha»

Appeared, the sculpture section of artists gathered to discuss this question. I was charged with the work as far as my daughter had died there. When I was informed about this decision, I started working in spite of the fact that it was very difficult for me.

I had no ideas, because before beginning the work it was necessary to find out what had happened there. So, I appealed to the head of the investigation, V.M. Kamarowski, but didn't receive enough information from him. Then I addressed Orthodox Bishop Board and learned that they had written a letter to President with the proposal to build a church near the pedestrian underground crossing. Then the idea to unite the Bishop Board's project with my own one came into my mind: to block the exit and create a memorial zone there. In this case a memorial complex will appear on the place of the tragedy.

At that time we learned that somebody was already working at this problem. For a long time I didn't know who it was, but later we found out that it was Henadz Buralkin, Head of Artistic Union. He knew that I was in charge of the work very well. I didn't know who ordered the monument. The higher officials from Minsk City Executive Committee directed everything. Usually Artistic Board of our sculpture center examines every work of such importance first. Then the project is directed to the Expert Council of the Ministry of Culture. But that time these procedures were ignored.

When the monument was being created it was announced that it would be a temporary one. We thought that if it were done well we wouldn't mind, but if we didn't like it we would insist on creation of a proper monument. The created monument imitates the steps on which our children died. But why imitate the things that are only three meters from it?

*(continued on page 4)*



**«The Wall of Memory» in the underground pedestrian crossing.**

# «Now We Can't Do Anything Else for Them...»

(begins on page 3)

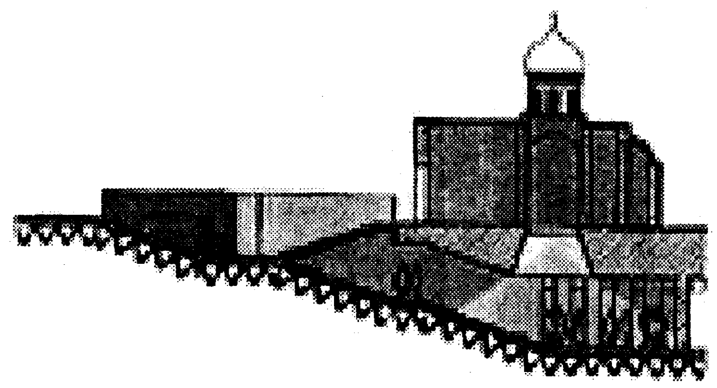
In the morning on May 31, 1999 A. Lukashenko came to the place where the children had died. He was the first to put flowers in the pedestrian underground crossing. After this friends and parents of the people who had perished started to put flowers there, write names of the dead and put candles. Probably Minsk City Executive Committee decided to get rid of the «Memory Wall», inscriptions and candles, the children who came and sat there. I think that it was the main idea of the monument that was established on the 40th day. In spite of the fact that this idea was realized people don't put their candles near the monument, they prefer to put flowers and candles on the real steps, where the tragedy took place.

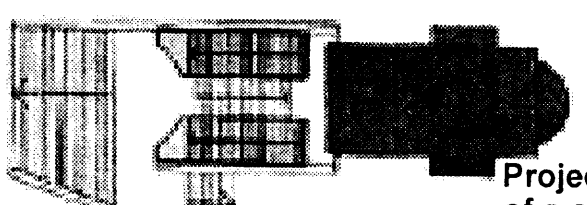
We, parents, consider it necessary to make a memorial part at the place where our children died. Today there exists a project of the monument that unites the idea of the church with the memorial part. The place where the children died should be railed off and a memorial board with their names should be put there. But, while meeting with the representatives of Minsk City Executive Committee we understood that the monument which stands there is not a temporary one. They are not going to install there anything else. This problem is not being solved now».

**Henadz Aliaxandravich Lawretski**, *Chairman of the Architecture-Art Council of the Belarusian Exarchate, supervisor of the project «Zamchyshcha»:* «Certainly, the tragedy on the Niamiha is a great sorrow for the parents, but it was a sign for all Orthodox people. This place is very difficult for the city because even now there are many burials there. Niamiha is the place from which Minsk began as a city. Taking into consideration all these facts we decided to build a monument to the people who died at that place in the form of a chapel. In accordance with Orthodox traditions people usually build some sign, a church or a cross at the place where people died and suffered.




Exit of the underground station «Niamiha (on the right there's the present monument.





**Project of a chapel above the place of the tragedy.**

There are two tasks. One task is to show that we perceived God's sign. On the other hand I think that it's unfair when a city with 900-year-old history doesn't have any symbols, signs, pointing at this rich history, spirituality and culture.

Ten years ago I started working at graphic reconstruction of Minsk Zamchyshcha Church. Having studied the materials I came to the conclusion that the decision should be close to the forms of XI – beginning of XII century. First of all in such a church there's no accent on Orthodox or Catholic Church. Though at that time there were slight differences between the Orthodox and Catholic branches of Christianity, the people were united and had a common religion. I think that decision of the chapel in such terms would help to better reveal the exposition of all that was left from the old city center. Such place would become a place where people could feel themselves descendants of the nation with a rich history.

I proposed to build a church near the church foundation of XI – beginning of XII century.

According to the proposal the city authorities should choose the place together with historians and builders. The entrance into the underground would stay functional. Building of a chapel wouldn't cause any loading on the ground and wouldn't enter any serious ground works either, as far as there are underground communications underneath.

I made this proposal at the sitting of our architecture Art-council and it was adopted. The bishop gave this proposal to the State authorities together with a special explanatory note. But when the historians started to discuss this proposal, they didn't understand it properly. They thought that we wanted to build the chapel on the foundation of the XI—XII centuries. They started a completely different conversation.

There are two ways in which the problem can be solved: the tragedy can be interpreted either as a sign for the whole nation or only the personal sorrow of the children's parents. Unfortunately, now we see that this tragedy remains only the personal tragedy for the parents. And the monument that was built there is a monument to the tragedy itself, but not to the things that stand behind it».

**Mikalai Iosifavich Lukianchyk**, *an architect:* «I've known Mikhail Mikhailavich Inkow since 1972, we have done many works together. After the tragedy we've discussed the events that had happened many times. Mikhail was continuously leading me to the thought of making a memorial at the place of the children's death. The first thing that came into my mind when I came into the pedestrian underground crossing was to close the exit at all. People shouldn't go up and down these bloody steps. We began to think about the monument. Having discussed the topic with the parents many times I came to the conclusion that it would be good to build a chapel-monument and to fence the exit at this place. Moreover, the analysis of the situation from the photography and the locality shows that it is quite possible to build a new exit, perpendicular to that which exists now.

To be sure that our idea is right we asked Minsk City Executive Committee for permission to conduct project-search works. Only detailed work at this variant, wide discussion and coordination can give an answer whether it's possible to build such monument. It will also let people decide what to build instead should this variant appear impossible. Yet, Executive Committee gives only one answer – it's impossible to do anything else at that place, everything has already been done. I propose to build here a chapel, not a big church. It could be the Saint Trinity chapel. If it's not possible to build the chapel, it is necessary at least to close the old exit and build a new one at the least expense. The time will show what will be built at this place. I'm sure something will be built there».

**Prepared by Tatsiana REVIAKA**

# PRISONS SPREAD TUBERCULOSIS

## BELARUSIANS MEDICS FACE THE FACT OF RAPID INCREASE OF QUANTITY OF PEOPLE ILL WITH TUBERCULOSIS...

The quantity of people ill with tuberculosis in Belarus increases everyday. Children suffer from it as well as grown-ups. What has happened? Some time ago it seemed that medics had outfought this mortal disease and it is a historical relict by now. Doctors say that the main causes of return of tuberculosis are the low life standard in the country, innutrition and redundancy. They also state that tuberculosis comes from colonies and prisons with the conditions that abet the disease. European countries get anxious about the problem of tuberculosis in post-Soviet countries. I've recently asked director of Stockholm Investigative Isolator whether they had prisoners ill with tuberculosis. He said that there were no such cases yet but they are afraid it can get to them through criminals from the former Soviet Union.

I managed to have a talk with a Belarusian ex-prisoner who got ill with tuberculosis in prison. His name was Pavel. He told me the following: « It's very easy to catch tuberculosis in prison. Even without having any contacts with ill people, though there is almost no protection from it. For instance, you've violated the prison regime, you are put into penal isolator. There's concrete floor in it. Beds are hinged to the wall from 6 a.m. to 23 p.m. You can't sleep on them in the daytime. The guards also take your wadded jacket away not to let you sleep. It's impossible to walk in the cell all day long. You want to sleep. So, you have to lie on the floor. You can sleep on it for half an hour only. Then you jump, do other physical exercises in order to feel warm. When I was 15 I was in prison in Valadarski Street in Minsk. I violated its regime and was put into the prison tower for five days. On the floor there was ten-centimeter water layer. It was made not to let the prisoners lie on the floor. In the center of the cell there was a round backless stool. I had to sit on it. Otherwise my feet froze because of the concrete floor. I also slept on this stool...

At first time I had focal pneumonia. I was treated in Vowkavichy (Dziarzhynsk area). There are two departments: opened and closed (for forcible treatment, people are directed there through court).

It's hard to speak about the conditions that exist in Vowkavichy. The building was built in 1946. At first Soviet Party authorities had a rest in the building (there's a good forest not far from it), then the building was converted into a hospital for people ill with syphilis. Now it's a hospital for those ill with tuberculosis. The conditions are the same as in prison. Prisons are even cleaner. From the ceilings of the hospital fall drops of water, there are no plugs, hot water is often off (the sick were let home to wash themselves after they signed the appropriate recognizements). It's very moist there. In such conditions it's impossible to cure tuberculosis at all. It flies in the air. The wards are not even aired. There are no disposable syringes, only old ones made of glass with old needles. You can die there – lie down on the bed and not rise up. In my ward there were eight prisoners. By the way, there are 80% of them in that «hospital». One of my acquaintances died. He spent nine years in prison and died at the age of 30. Everyday somebody dies there. But there's no morgue, only a garage, where corpse are put. In this garage a rat ate off a corpse nose. If the people who died have relatives, they are taken away from that garage. In the hospital there are also people with no particular place of residence. They go there themselves because there they are given food three times a day and are provided with beds. There also people who lived in cellars and got ill with tuberculosis. They are taken to hospital on a stretcher, because they can't walk themselves.

In two weeks after I got into Vowkavichy hospital the doctor (he has a summer residence not far from the hospital) asked me to help him to discharge bricks at it. I told him that I was not his captive, but an ill person and that my left lung didn't work. After this I was discharged from the hospital for «violation of the regime».

This hospital in Vowkavichy is made not to cure the ill people, but to isolate them from the society. In general, it's a kind of reservation».

**Noted down by**
**Palina STSEPANENKA**

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# CYNICISM ON THE HIGHEST STATE LEVEL

Belarusian Authorities Entrusted Ministry of Health to Work Out Such Drugs For Participants of Olympic Games Which Won't Be Found by International Doping-control...

At the end of April, at the sitting of Presidium of the Belarusian government devoted to preparation of the national sportsmen for the Olympic games that will take place in Melbourne, the following words were taken into the sitting protocol: "To the Ministry of Health: organize a pharmacological center for experiments, introduction and adoption of pharmacological drugs for higher achievements of the Republic of Belarus in sport at the base of Vitsebsk State Medical Institute together with the Ministry of Sport ".

What drugs are meant, is pretty clear. These are prohibited medicines that give people a possibility to achieve high resutls in the branch of sport. They kill the sportsmen and their future children as well. That's why such medicines are officially prohibited and the sportsmen are subject to strict control from the side of special commissions.

During the sitting Uladzimir Iarmoshyn, the present premier-minister, reminded that in the times of existence of German Democratic Republic a special laboratory of pharmacological support of sport worked under supervision of "Schtasi". He advised the Ministry of Health to make contacts with KGB. It's worth mentioning that the first experiments of such drugs on people were made by German nazis in concentration camps.

Minister of Internal Affairs Ural Latypaw stood against putting these words into the protocol:

"I propose to exclude point 5.3 from the protocol, which is an open document. It can get into somebody's hands. This should be arranged as secret instructions on pharmacological support, because people usually pay much attention to such things. It can cause great reaction..."

U. Zamiatalin confirmed the necessity of working out of prohibited drugs:

"... We ask all the institutions that are put in charge of it by this protocol note to take exceptionally initiative and active measures for execution of all they were told.

First of all I mean... pharmacology. Ten years ago we said that sport ought to be fair, now nobody speaks about it. It's naive. The problem is how to make a special drug whicht will give the greatest physical effect and won't be found. This task stands everywhere... We think that the protocol note, commission to the Ministry of Health to professionally deal with this problem, is a right step. There can be neither doubts nor retreats. And it's up to the Ministry of Health and specialists in health protection to deal with this problem..."

So, president's care about sport has logical results: for «high achievements in sport» the State wants to take into account neither health of its citizens, nor international public thought.

**The information**
**Department of «Viasna»**

# EVENTS FACTS COMMENTS

*(begins on page 1)*

*On May 1* during the official celebration of Work Day a number of people were detained. From 10 to 11 a.m. a meeting organized by the authorities was carried out. Before beginning of the action the policemen detained several people with national symbols (stranded white-red-white flags) who were on their way to the meeting. The detained were taken to Central District Department of Internal Affairs (DDIA). There the policemen confiscated the flags and the posters. During the meeting the police continued hunting the people carrying national symbols. The journalists who tried to photograph the events were also detained. According to information of Mahiliow branch of HRC «Viasna» the police also routed the young people who were going to the meeting. The majority of the detained people were set free after two hours of detention. The policemen composed protocols of violation of Article No.16 of Code of Administrative Infringements of the Republic of Belarus on four people and gave them call-ups to court. All in all more than 15 people were detained. Among them there were: Aliaxandr Aliaxandrovich (correspondent of «Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta» («Belarusian Business Newspaper»), Siarhei Hirkin (member of the BPF «Adradzhenne»), Mikalai Iliin and Uladzimir Kalishevich (members of «Young Front»), Ihar Irkho (correspondent of Mahiliow newspaper «De-facto», during the detention was done harm to his camera, and he was also injured, the detention was carried out by member of the special police forces Ihar Abiaremka), Maryna Irkho (correspondent of the same newspaper) ,Aliaxei Kolchyn (member of Mahiliow branch of HRC «Viasna»), Vital Makaranka (Chairman of Mahiliow City Board of the BPF «Adradzhenne»), Valery Sivukha (Chairman of Mahiliow branch of the Belarusian Christian-democratic Party).




*The public assembly «The Legal Assistance to Citizens» contemporized issue of an independent investigation «Where Is Iury Zakharanka?» to the first anniversary of disappearance of ex-minister of internal affairs. On May 5 presentation of the book was organized. During his speech at the presentation Chairman of «Legal Assistance to Citizens» Aleh Vowchak emphasized that there are purely political reasons for disappearance of I. Zakharanka. In the compilation there's information taken from publications of the Belarusian press, information of international human rights organizations such as «International League of Human Rights» and «Amnesty International», materials of the public committee on investigation of circumstances in which I. Zakharanka disappeared. In the photo above: the moment of presentation.*

*On May 7 an unauthorized picket was organized in the place where ex-minister of internal affairs I. Zakharanka had disappeared. Zakharanka's relatives and friends took part in the picket. On the photo below in the center: Zakharanka's wife and daughter.*




*On May 2* Siarhei Pianykh who had been detained and beaten on March 25 (Day of Freedom) received answer of Savetski District Prosecutor's office to his complaint and claim to initiate a criminal case against the policemen who had exceeded their official powers. S. Pianykh was detained on March 25 during the assault of the headquarters of the BPF «Adradzhenne» in Varvashenia Street, 8. During the detention S. Pianykh was beaten. He was kept in a special police department in Akrestsin Street from March 25 till March 27. On March 27 his case was considered at Minsk Savetski District Court. Forensic expertise officially confirmed the fact of beating. Siarhei was justified. In the response of the Prosecutor's office it was said: «The district Prosecutor's office made a check-up basing on your application. According to its results we decided not to initiate the criminal case, basing on point 2 of Article No.5 of Criminal-Process Code of the Republic of Belarus (absence of corpus delicti». S. Pianykh plans to appeal against the decision.

*On May 3* the House of Representatives of USA Congress adopted Act No. 304 with scathing criticism and condemnation of Lukashenko's regime. 409 from 435 congressmen voted «for» the resolution. The House of Representatives (together with Senate) decided to: «1. Condemn the outrageous human rights violations in Belarus from the side of regime of the Belarusian president Aliaxandr Lukashenko; 2. Condemn the accusative verdicts on cases of Andrei Klimaw, Vasil Liavonaw and Uladzimir Kudzinaw on politically motivated accusations and claim their discharge; 3. Express great anxiety concerning facts of disappear of Victar Hanchar, Anatol Krasowski and Iury Zakharanka and also to call Lukashenko's regime to provide full and timely investigation of the above mentioned cases; 4. Call to urgent dialogue between Lukashenko's regime and the opposition for renovation of the democratically elected government in the country; 5. To call Lukashenko's regime to provide respect and security to the rights of the Belarusian citizens including those opposition activists who are illegally imprisoned in violation of their constitutional rights, call the regime to respect the principles of power of the law and independent judiciary system; 6. To call Lukashenko to legal, free and just parliamentary elections in accordance with OSCE standards; 7. To support the address of Consultative Board of Opposition Parties to Government of the Russian Federation and State Duma and Soviet of Federation, in which the Board demands from them to stop giving support to Lukashenko's regime; 8. To call the international publicity to support the Belarusian opposition, continue meetings with the legally elected Belarusian parliament; 9. To support sovereignty, independence and territorial unity of Belarus as well as market reforms and its further integration into the Transatlantic Commonwealth of Nations». The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs called this resolution «biased». It also interpreted the appeals to Russia as «obvious intrusion into internal affairs» of Russia and Belarus.

*On May 3* Anton Artsiomenka, member of the BPF "Adradzhenne", applied to "Viasna". In his application Anton stated that approximately at 8 p.m. on May 2 he had torn a flysheet of the Russian pro-fascist organization "Russian National Unity" (RNU) off the wall of the pedestrian underground crossing of the underground station "Victory Square". He was detained by a policeman and taken to the police point of the underground station. There the policeman, whose surname was Daneika, routed Anton at presence of a police-witness. Then the policeman composed a protocol

of violation of Article No. 247 of Administrative Code of the Republic of Belarus (posting of fly-sheets in the places that are not meant for this, so called "anti-sanitary"). In the protocol he wrote that A. Artsiomenka had posted the flysheet on the wall. In the part of the protocol, called "Explanations" Anton Artsiomenka wrote that he had not posted the flysheet, but torn it off the wall. In his application to the HRC "Viasna" Anton also expressed his indignation "with the behavior of the policeman who did such things in Victory Square on the eve of the 55th anniversary of victory over Fascists in World War II».

*On May 14* the Belarusian Social-democratic Party «Narodnaia Hramada» organized a mass promenade with flowers and attributes of the Belarusian national colors (white-red-white). The action was devoted to the fifth anniversary of referendum 1995 which exchanged the national emblem and flag into the modified Soviet symbols. «The native language and symbols of Fatherland are eternal!» – was written in he fly-sheets that invited people to the action.

*On May 11* Minsk Leninski District Court stopped the administrative case against vice-chairman of the BPF Iury Khadyka. The case was brought against Khadyka upon the second part of Article No. 167 of Code of Administrative Infringements for participation in the opposition action organized on July 21, 1999. At the case consideration on September 21, 1999 the defendant had been fined 150 million rubles... I. Khadyka appealed to Minsk City Court against this decision. This court abolished the sentence made at Leniniski District Court and directed the case for reconsideration to another judge. On May 11 the judge Alena Tsierashkova closed the case because of absence of corpus delicti in Khadyka's actions.

*At night on May 13* «Young Front» carried out the action called: «The city belongs to us!». The action was contemporized to the fifth anniversary of the referendum after which the national symbols were replaced by Communistic ones. In the morning on May 14 one could see white-red-flags hanging in Frantsysk Scaryna avenue and skyscrapers of the city suburbs. Such flags also appeared in Mahiliow, Vitsebsk, Brest, Barysaw, Zaslawie and other cities and towns of the country.

*On May 15* mothers of large families were going to go on a termless hunger-strike. The reason was that these mothers are members of organization «Source of Charity». The authorities promised to give them room for office in Lenin Street in the center of the city. The authorities haven't given the room for the organization for four months. The planned hunger-strike didn't take place only because on May 12 the organization finally received room in one of the central districts of the city.

*On May 15* the independent newspaper «Nasha Niva» was warned for publication of the article «The plague of fascism. A. Lukashenko copies Hitler» written by Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of 13th Convocation Siamion Sharetski. The official reason for the warning is violation of Article No. 5 of Law on Press – «abuse of the freedom of mass information». It's the second warning the newspaper received. The first warning was made for publication of the letter of T. Sudzilowskaia, one of the newspaper's readers «I grudge Chechen». That time the State Committee on Press considered some conclusions of the letter as «exasperation of national enmity». Now the newspaper faces the danger of being closed down.

*In May 2000* the Belarusian Ministry of Justice refused to register the Republican Public Organization «The Belarusian Assembly of Young Politicians» (BAYP) for the third time. The Ministry of Justice found ostensible violations of Articles No. 5, 8 and 10 of Law on Public Organizations in the materials submitted for registration. In private, in the refusal it is said that the young politicians violated the law by taking under-aged people in the organization and electing them into elective bodies... BAYP was proposed to appeal against this decision of the Ministry of Justice in the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus.

*In May 2000* Antifascist Committee was created in Belarus. At the head of the committee there are three chairmen: poet A. Volski, cinema producer I. Khashchavatski, deputy of the 13th Convocation L. Hraznova. The decision to create such committee was adopted by the Supreme Board of the Democratic Forces in connection with activation of profascist organizations (such as the Russian National Unity) in the country.



Photo of "RF"

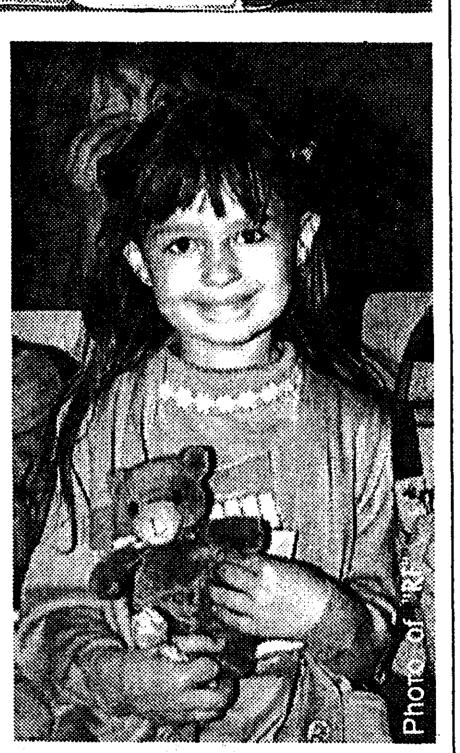


Photo of "RF"

***On May 5-12** the week of actions «Say «No» to violence» organized by the Belarusian Foundation «To Children of Charnobyl» took place. That week there were numerous concerts and competitions. The people present again reminded of terrible figures: more than 40% of the Belarusian children have nervous-psychical disturbances. More than 26 000 children live in children's communities...*

*In the photos: children's poster devoted to the action; Alisa Krupskaia, one of the winners of the week's competitions.*

# LEADERS OF WORKING MOVEMENT ARE... REDUNDANT

While the Ministry of Justice invents reasons for its refusal to register Working Union «Unity», heads of enterprises show their unique abilities in the sphere of word equilibristic not to employ activists of working movement. The authorities are frightened by the perspectives of activity of the new organization. The more that Siarhei Antonchyk, the deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 13th Convocation who had presented in the Parliament his report on corruption in Aliaxandr' Lukashenko's crew, was elected Chairman of the Union. Another well-known activist of the working movement, Heorhi Mukhin, was elected member of Working Union Board.

On May 17, 2000 he applied to "Viasna". In 1999 H. Mukhin was fired from Minsk Tractor Factory for his activity as a member of the Independent Trade-union (he went on a hunger-strike at his working place). He stayed unemployed for a year and was given no compensation. On May 15 Minsk Leninski District Employment Service finally directed him to Minsk Engine Factory to work at Mechanic Shop No. 6 as a set-up man of machine-tools and manipulators with program operation. On May 18 H. Mukhin went to his working place, but the shop director S. Brakarenka refused to employ him because of «absence of vacancies». The same answer was given to Mukhin by head of Motor-bicycle Factory. Mukhin received the most ridiculous answer from the head of personnel department of Minsk Tractor Factory, who refused to employ him «because of disagreement of the workers». As a matter of fact, there are several thousand employees at this factory, and to have the right to say such things one should have gathered a special sitting of the working personnel... It's quite obvious that on the eve of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections the authorities are frightened with the increase of activity of the workers and try to isolate the activists from ordinary workers, exclude them from public and politic life.

**The Information Department of «Viasna»**

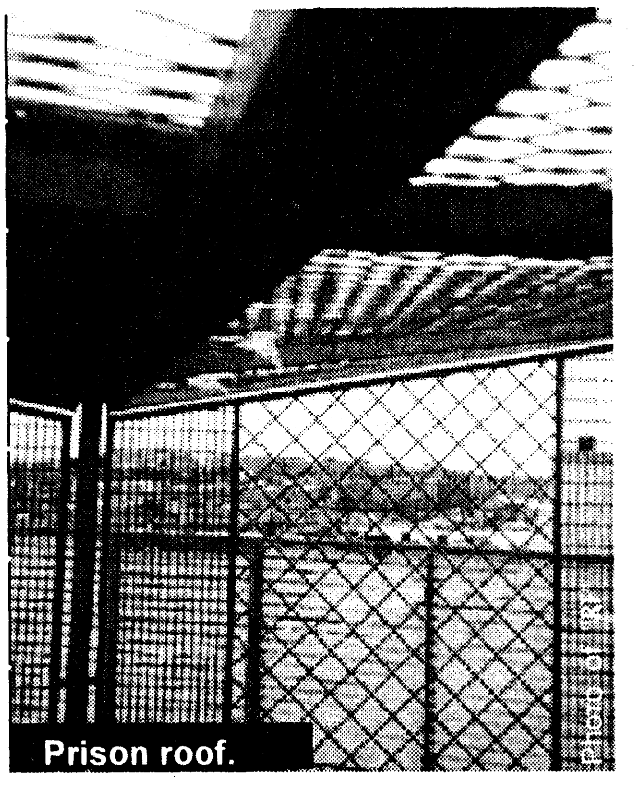
# PRISONERS' PARADISE?

Naturally, we were not allowed to photograph prisoners because in the whole world it is considered to be violation of human rights. We could photograph the guards (handsome boys and girls in blue uniform) if they agreed. But everywhere the staff was busy and we didn't want to disturb them.

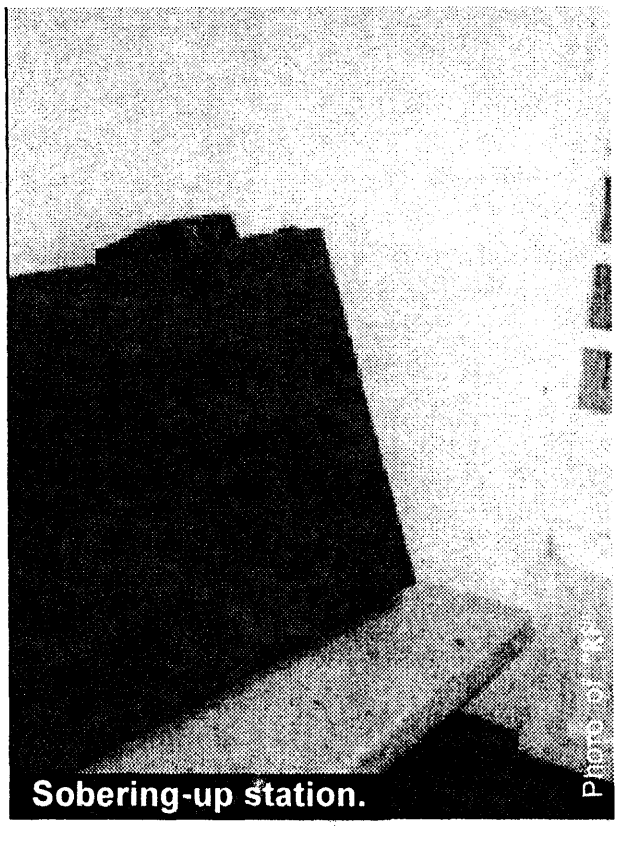
When my acquaintances from Minsk watched photos of Investigative Isolator cells they always said: «Probably this is the room of the Swedish hotel you lived in». It was quite possible to think so. I shall tell you about the things you can find in a cell of any Swedish Investigative Isolator. First of all, there's a good bed with a mattress, a pillow and a thin blanket (it's warm in the cells). Besides, there is a small TV-set over the bed. TV-sets are the prison's property. But in prisons where convicts serve their sentence, a TV-set is in the hall. In the cells the prisoners are allowed to have their own ones, brought by their friends or relatives. On the wall over the bed there's a small lighting lamp. You can see Venetian blinds in the windows. But the most unusual thing is the washbasin – a real white washbasin with a tap. In Belarusian Investigative Isolators there are lavatory pans instead of washbasins (remember the descriptions given in the bulletin publications by former prisoners and Valery Shchukin). In Swedish Isolator lavatories are situated in separate rooms.

When my Minsk friends look at the picture of the prison dining room they think that it is a good cafe or a bar. In the dining room you can see curtains in the windows, flowers on the tables and walls. The lightning appliances and the flowers are of the same color. We also saw kitchens where the prisoners work (those who are allowed to leave their cells). We were in the kitchen between lunch and dinner. The kitchens were very clean and there was a smell of chips, buns and fresh bread. These foodstuffs you could see in special capacities with wheels. It's quite clear why we saw women-prisoners in a good mood. They were in the room where prisoners usually spend their free time. Some women were sitting. One of them was laying cards (for telling fortunes, as it seemed to me), the others who were around her were talking about something and laughing.

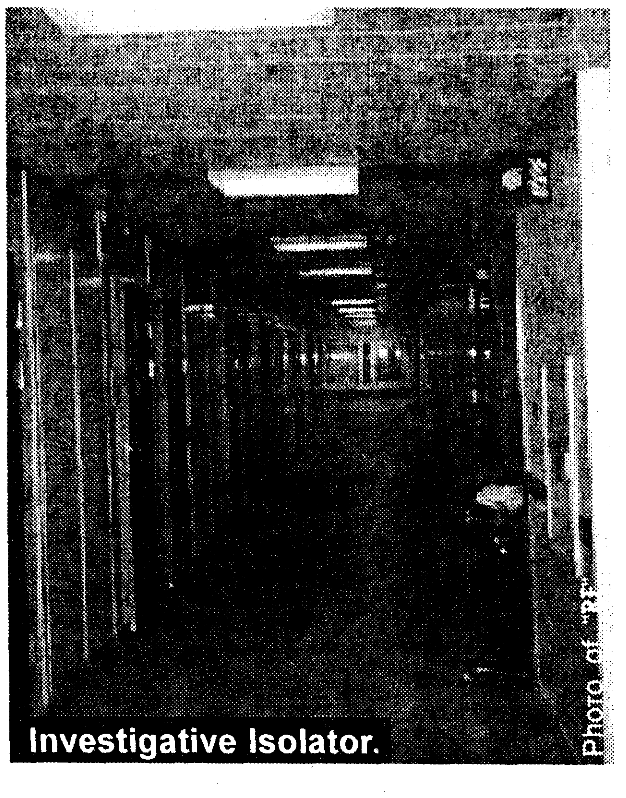
I asked Math Landebrink if there were cases when the imprisoned men and women fell in love. «No, they live in separate buildings and never meet», — he said. Yet, we were told about an incident that happened long ago when a girl fell in love with her guard. But there wasn't anything serious because the girl left the Isolator for another prison or was discharged.



Prison roof.



Sobering-up station.



Investigative Isolator.

The investigative part occupies four floors in Kronabergsheknet prsion. There is also a sobering-up station. It was under the police supervision until the new law about taking care of drunk people that was adopted in August 1999. Now the police are to bring the drunk to the special department of the Isolator. «It is better for the police to be in the streets and fulfill their duties there», — thinks the deputy chief of the prison. We, Belarusians, noted at once that his personnel take better care of drunk people than the police do.

Having seen the Swedish sobering-up station in the picture my acquaintances considered it to be a hotel room, though there's no TV-set, washbasin or wall lamp. There is a tap with drinking water and holes in the floor for water to flow down. As a rule, the drunk people found by the police sleep there at night under guards' and doctors' surveillance. The doctors look into the room every 15 minutes. No information is sent to the jobs of the drunk people. Their reception can be even anonymous. Yet, when drunk teenagers are found, their parents are informed. If a drunk person was driving a car, the information is sent to social institutions. Then such a driver has a choice to spend a month in prison or a year of anti-alcohol treatment courses. Most of the people choose the courses in spite of the strict control for the sober way of life.

«We don't want the people who drink too much to sleep in the streets, because they are often robbed or even killed», explains Maths Landebrink. «But we don't register them as criminals. It's not a crime to be drunk». During our stay in Sweden after we visited the prison newspapers wrote about the case when the police killed a drunk man. It happened five years ago. All this time his mother has been striving for punishment of the policemen. It seems that some problems with the police are international ones.

**Tatsiana SNITKA**

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*(continued from issue 7-8)*

The Right to Freedom. The Bulletin of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna". Published twice a month in Belarusan, English and Russian languages. Circulation 299 copies. Editor-in-Chief Ales BYALATSKY.

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*In this number photos from the Centre "Viasna" archives are used.*